



ARTS, CULTURE
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Levers for Building the
Africa we Want

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

Media Advisory

Date: 29th September 2021

What: Youth Mental Health Campaign: *#HowRUFeeeling*

When: Tuesday, 21st September 2021 to Thursday, 21st October 2021

Who: The Women, Gender and Youth Directorate of the African Union Commission, in collaboration with UNICEF, IPPF, and UN Women Liaison Offices to the AU and UNECA.

Background:

According to the Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention, mental health problems appear to be increasing in importance in Africa. They further reveal that in most parts of the continent, people's attitudes towards mental diseases are still strongly influenced by traditional beliefs in supernatural causes and remedies. This belief system often results in unhelpful or health-damaging responses to mental disease, to stigmatisation of unsound persons and to reluctance or delay in seeking appropriate care for these problems.

UNICEF research reveals that in Africa, only 15 out of 55 Member States have a plan or strategy in place on mental health for adolescents and children. Despite overwhelmingly poor determinants of health in Africa, there is a culture of silence around mental health issues. Africans are more likely to believe in supernatural causes of mental issues, as well as a general lack of willpower, rather than environmental causes. However, the reality is that Africans, especially African youth, have a very high prevalence of depression, schizophrenia and personality disorders caused by chronic, long-term poor mental health.

It is against this backdrop that the Youth Development and Engagement Division within the AUC Women, Gender and Youth Directorate in collaboration with UNICEF, IPPF, UN Women, and UNFPA Liaison Offices to the AU and UNECA launches a Continental Youth Mental Health Campaign themed *#HowRUFeeeling* which aims to capitalize on the following 3 "**As**" - **Awareness, Attitudes, and Actions** to raise the awareness and knowledge of Africa's youth on mental health and mobilize public support to change the status quo around mental health in Africa while normalizing mental health conversations on the continent.

The digital campaign runs from the **21st of September to the 21st of October 2021**.

The specific objectives of the youth mental health campaign are to:



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1. Raise awareness of mental health issues around Africa and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health.
2. Provide an opportunity and platform for duty-bearers and policymakers working on mental health issues to exchange information on ongoing initiatives, their experiences, and lessons learned to make mental health policies and services responsive to the needs of African youth.

This campaign consists of the following activities;

Dates	Activity
21 Sept - 7 Oct	#HowRUFeeling Survey
4 Oct - 16 Oct	#HowRUFeeling TikTok challenge
11 Oct - 16 Oct	Infographics unpacking mental health
	Showcasing youth-led initiatives on mental health
	Showcasing impact stories
15 Oct	Egumeni Session: Fireside chat theme: <i>"HowRUFeeling: Normalizing Mental Health Conversations in Africa"</i>
16 Oct	Mini-documentary
21 Oct	Egumeni Session: Twitter Chat theme: <i>"HowRUFeeling: Normalizing Mental Health Conversations in Africa"</i>

Journalists are invited to cover the campaign.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Nyandoh Paho Tador, AUC Youth Division Communications Officer, via:
TadorN@africa-union.org

Mr. Derrick Ochuot, Communications Officer - UNICEF Office to the AU and ECA,
via: dochuot@unicef.org

Ms. Yossra Kallali, AUC Youth Division Project Officer, IPPF Packard Project Lead
via: Kallaliy@africa-union.org / Ykallali@ippf.org



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Ms. Dukaye Amare Mergia, Knowledge Management, and Coordination, UN Women
Liaison to the AU and ECA, via: dukaye.mergia@unwomen.org

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